

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated February 10, 2006, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration based on the above claim amendments and the following remarks. Applicants respectfully submit that the claims as presented are in condition for allowance. Claims 16, 18-19, 38, 40-41, 60 and 62-63 have been canceled and Claims 1, 5, 17, 20-21, 23, 27, 39, 42-43, 45, 49, 61 and 64-65 have been amended, leaving Claims 1-15, 17, 20-37, 39, 42-59, 61, and 64-66 for consideration upon entry of the present amendment. The claim cancellations and amendments should not be construed an acquiescence in the rejection.

Claim Amendments

Claim 1 has been amended to include the elements of original Claim 19, Claim 23 has been amended to include the elements of original Claim 41, and Claim 45 has been amended to include the elements of original Claim 63. The remaining claim elements were made to correct dependency errors introduced by the amendments to Claims 1, 23 and 45.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has indicated that Claims 19, 41 and 63 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The elements of Claim 19 have been added to Claim 1, the elements of Claim 41 have been added to Claim 23, and the elements of Claim 63 have been added to Claim 45. Thus, amended Claim 1 is Claim 19 rewritten in independent form, amended Claim 23 is Claim 41 rewritten in independent form, and amended Claim 45 is Claim 63 rewritten in independent form. Applicants submit that Claims 1, 23 and 45 as amended are in condition for allowance.

Applicants submit that Claims 2-15, 17, and 20-22 are allowable at least due to their dependency on Claim 1. Applicants also submit that Claims 24-37, 39, and 42-44 are allowable at least due to their dependency on Claim 23. Applications further submit that Claims 46-59, 61, and 64-66 are allowable at least due to their dependency on Claim 45.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1-2, 5-9, 16-18, 20-22, 23, 24, 27-31, 38-40, 42-44, 45-46, 49-53, 60-62, and 64-66 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Yavatkar et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,735,702 (“Yavatkar”). The rejection to Claims 16, 18, 38, 40, 60 and 62 is moot because they have been canceled.

As indicated above, Claims 1, 23 and 45 are believed to be allowable. Applicants submit that Claims 2, 5-9, 17, and 20-22 are patentable at least due to their dependency on Claim 1; that Claims 24, 27-31, 39, and 42-44 are patentable at least due to their dependency on Claim 23; and that Claims 46, 49-53, 61, and 64-66 are patentable at least due to their dependency on Claim 45.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 3-4, 25-26, and 47-48 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ross et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,477,571 (“Ross”) in view of Chao et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,549,513. Applicants submit that Claims 3-4 are patentable at least due to their dependency on Claim 1, that Claims 25-26 are patentable at least due to their dependency on Claim 23, and that Claims 47-48 are patentable at least due to their dependency on Claim 45.

Claims 10-11, 32-33 and 54-55 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Yavatkar in view of Sera et al. U.S. Patent Publication No. 2001/0005371. Applicants submit that Claims 10-11 are patentable at least due to their dependency on Claim 1, that Claims 32-33 are patentable at least due to their dependency on Claim 23, and that Claims 54-55 are patentable at least due to their dependency on Claim 45.

Claims 12, 15, 34, 37, 56 and 59 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Yavatkar in view of Ross. Applicants submit that Claims 12 and 15 are patentable at least due to their dependency on Claim 1, that Claims 34 and 37 are patentable at least due to their dependency on Claim 23, and that Claims 56 and 59 are patentable at least due to their dependency on Claim 45.

Claims 13-14, 35-36, and 57-58 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Yavatkar in view of Frezza et al. U.S. Patent No. 4,638,356. Applicants submit that Claims 13-14 are patentable at least due to their dependency on Claim 1, that Claims 35-36 are patentable at least due to their dependency on Claim 23, and that Claims 57-58 are patentable at least due to their dependency on Claim 45.

Conclusion

It is believed that the foregoing amendments and remarks fully comply with the Office Action and that Claims 1-66 are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested.

In the event the Examiner has any questions regarding this Amendment or believes that a telephone conference with Applicants' attorneys would be advantageous to the disposition of this case, the Examiner is cordially request to telephone the undersigned.

In the event that there are any additional fees with respect to this Amendment, Applicants' attorneys respectfully request that such fees be withdrawn from Deposit Account No. 09-0463 maintained by Applicants' attorneys.

Respectfully submitted,

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